

July 23, 2018  
1420 East 6<sup>th</sup> Ave.  
P.O. Box 200701  
Helena, MT 59620-0701

Environmental Quality Council  
Montana Department of Environmental Quality  
Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks  
Fisheries Division  
Region 2 Office  
Montana State Library, Helena  
MT Environmental Information Center  
Montana Audubon Council  
Montana Wildlife Federation  
Mineral Conservation District  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Helena  
State Historic Preservation Office, Helena  
City of St Regis  
Mineral County  
USFS Lolo National Forest

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Enclosed is an Environmental Assessment (EA) prepared for the Community Pond Program (CPP). The Program tentatively plans to provide partial funding for a project at St. Regis fishing pond, which would deepen the pond, develop shoreline access points, install fishing docks/platforms, and install signage. It is in the community of St. Regis in Mineral County.

Please submit any comments by 11:59 pm on August 22, 2018 to Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks at the address listed above. If you have any questions, feel free to contact me at (406) 444-2432. Please note that this draft EA will be considered as final if no substantive comments are received by the deadline listed above.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Michelle McGree", followed by a horizontal line.

Michelle McGree, Program Officer  
Habitat Bureau  
Fisheries Division  
e-mail: [mmcgree@mt.gov](mailto:mmcgree@mt.gov)

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT  
Fisheries Division  
Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks  
St. Regis Community Park Kids Fishing Pond Enhancement

General Purpose: The Community Pond Program (CPP) was developed by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks to enhance fishing opportunities in or near Montana communities. Funding is intended for construction or improvement of public fishing ponds, and preference is given to projects that create or enhance opportunities for youth/family angling and education. Funding is derived from the sale of fishing licenses, and authority for the CPP is provided by the Montana State Legislature.

The CPP tentatively plans to provide partial funding toward the improvement of St. Regis fishing pond, which is a 1-acre pond located at the edge of St. Regis within a city park complex. Currently, the pond is shallow (max depth 4 ft), gets very warm in the summer, has significant vegetative growth, and limited signage. The project would deepen the pond, develop shoreline access points, add fishing docks/platforms, and install signage.

I. Location of Project:

This project will be conducted at St. Regis Community Park, located at Township 18N, Range 28W, Section 24, SE1/4 (47.30125, -115.10289) in St. Regis, MT in Mineral County (Figure 1).

II. Need for the Project:

One goal within FWP's Statewide Fisheries Management Plan is to provide opportunities for people to access and enjoy the public waters of the State for fishing and other forms of water-based recreation. This project accomplishes this goal by improving existing sites and recreation use in an area with limited pond/lake angling opportunities for youth and families, which is a core component of the fisheries management plan.

III. Scope of the Project:

The project proposes to deepen the pond, develop shoreline access points, add fishing platforms, and install signage. This project is expected to cost \$25,000. Of this total, the FFIP would be contributing up to \$15,000 to complete the project. The remaining funding is listed below.

Contributor	In-kind services	In-kind cash
Applicant	\$5,500	
USFS		\$5,000
Total: \$10,500		

This project involves improvements at an existing community kids' fishing pond in St. Regis to enhance fish survival, fishery quality, fishing access, and public education. The site lies at the edge of St Regis within a public park complex, just off Interstate-90 and Highway 135, adjacent to public ball fields and

other facilities. Currently, the pond is very shallow (max depth 4 ft), gets extremely warm in summer, has limited shoreline fishing locations due to vegetation/topography, exhibits excessive macrophyte and algae growth, and has very limited signage at the site. Proposed improvements will address all of these aspects, facilitating higher quality fishing, improved survival for stocked trout and a better overall site for Mineral County. Specific project components include removal of fill from both ends of pond to enhance depth and fish survival, hauling of fill to a local site, development of several shoreline access points, installation of a fishing docks/platforms, and much improved signage.

#### IV. Environmental Impact Review Checklist:

#### **Evaluation of the impacts of the Proposed Action including secondary and cumulative impacts on the Physical and Human Environment**

Project Title: St. Regis Community Park Kids Fishing Pond Enhancement

Division/Bureau: Fisheries Division / Fish Management Bureau (CPP)

Description of Project: The CPP tentatively plans to provide partial funding toward the improvement of St. Regis Community Park Kids Fishing Pond. The project would deepen the pond, develop shoreline access points, add fishing platforms, and install signage.

#### **A. POTENTIAL IMPACTS TO THE PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT**

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Provided
1. Geology and soil quality, stability and moisture				X		
2. Air quality or objectionable odors			XA			X
3. Water quality, quantity and distribution (surface or groundwater)			XB			X
4. Existing water right or reservation				X		
5. Vegetation cover, quantity and quality			Xc			X
6. Unique, endangered, or fragile vegetative species				X		
7. Terrestrial or aquatic life and/or habitats			XD			X
8. Unique, endangered, or fragile wildlife or fisheries species				X		
9. Introduction of new species into an area				X		
10. Changes to abundance or movement of species				X		

## B. POTENTIAL IMPACTS ON THE HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

Will the proposed action result in potential impacts to:	Unknown	Potentially Significant	Minor	None	Can Be Mitigated	Comments Provided
1. Noise and/or electrical effects			X <sub>E</sub>			X
2. Land use				X		
3. Risk and/or health hazards				X		
4. Community impact				X <sub>F</sub>		X
5. Public services/taxes/utilities				X		
6. Potential revenue and/or project maintenance costs				X <sub>G</sub>		X
7. Aesthetics and recreation				X <sub>H</sub>		X
8. Cultural and historic resources				X		
9. Evaluation of significance				X		
10. Generate public controversy				X		

## V. Explanation of Impacts to the Physical Environment

- A. Short term objectionable odors may be created when pond is excavated, and fill is temporarily placed at site prior to transport to repository.
- B. Low water levels and high turbidity are expected temporarily in pond when pond is drawn down for excavation (deepening).
- C. Small scale changes in shoreline vegetation are planned to create specific locations for fishing and docks. The perimeter of pond is largely manicured lawn, as part of the park complex.
- D. Aquatic/Terrestrial life in pond includes stocked fish, painted turtles, aquatic insects, migratory waterfowl and other species typical of artificial ponds in western Montana. These species will be temporarily impacted or displaced during project construction, but little or no mortality expected.

## VI. Explanation of Impacts to the Human Environment

- E. There may be short term, local increase in noise associated with heavy equipment use during project construction.
- F/G/H. A positive community impact is planned and anticipated through increased use and visitation in the area, increased revenue for local businesses, and increased recreational opportunity for young anglers.

VII. Narrative Evaluation and Comment.

There are no anticipated cumulative negative effects associated with the project. The project will simply enhance the quality and effectiveness of an existing facility in St Regis for the benefit of the community and visitors to the area.

VIII. Discussion and Evaluation of Reasonable Alternatives.

1. No Action Alternative.

If no funding is provided through the CPP, either the applicant would have to seek additional sources of funding to complete the project, or the affected area of St. Regis Community Park would remain as-is, without additional shoreline access points, fishing platforms, and signage. The pond would remain shallow with warm temperatures and excessive vegetation.

2. The Proposed Alternative.

The proposed alternative intends to provide partial funding through the CPP to enhance St. Regis Community Park Kids Fishing Pond.

IX. Environmental Assessment Conclusion Section.

1. Other groups or agencies contacted or which may have overlapping jurisdiction:

Mineral County  
USFS- Lolo National Forest

2. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency:

None.

3. Is an EIS required?

No. We conclude, from this review, that the proposed activities will have an overall positive impact on the physical and human environment, and will therefore not require the extensive analysis associated with an EIS.

4. Level of public involvement.

The proposed project was reviewed and supported by FWP and has been approved by the Fisheries Division Administrator. The EA will be distributed to all individuals and groups listed

on the cover letter and will be published on the FWP webpage: [www.fwp.mt.gov](http://www.fwp.mt.gov).

5. Duration of comment period?

Public comment will be accepted through 11:59 PM, August 22, 2018.

6. Person(s) responsible for preparing the EA.

Michelle McGree, Program Officer  
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Helena, MT 59620  
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Contributor: Ladd Knotek (FWP), Mineral County

FIGURE 1: project location

